

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 22-24, 26, 27 and 30 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 15 and 31 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. This Amendment supplements Applicant's June 18, 2008 Amendment, the arguments from which are not repeated here. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration; (c) do not present any additional claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 1, 2, 22-24, 26, 27 and 30.

The Office Action rejects claims 8, 9 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,362,894 to Shima (hereinafter "Shima-894") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,778,289 to Iwata and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0231327 to Ashey et al. (hereinafter "Ashey"). The rejection is moot because claims 8, 9 and 15 have been canceled.

The Office Action rejects claims 25, 28, 29 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,867,874 to Shima (hereinafter "Shima-874") in view of Iwata and Ashey. The rejection is moot because claims 25, 28, 29 and 31 have been canceled.

In view of the foregoing remarks, in supplement to the claim amendments and remarks made in Applicant's June 18, 2008 Amendment, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:RHR/emd

Attachment: Petition for Extension of Time

Date: August 8, 2008

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